

## **Required Steps to Membership**

### **A. REFERENCE/BACKGROUND CHECK**

1. Reference calls will be made by the presbytery staff / COM and PNC for all persons being seriously considered by a PNC.
2. An initial interview will be conducted by COM.
3. When a Pastor Nominating Committee has selected a person they wish to present as the candidate, the PNC Chair informs the COM Moderator
4. The COM Moderator requests the Presbytery Office to contact the potential candidate with instructions on how to initiate the background investigation via the vendor's secure website, providing appropriate login information.
5. If referencing and/or background checks over the past 10 years reveal previous incidents, the following factors will be considered by COM in determining if the process will continue:
  - a. the nature and severity of the previous incident(s)
  - b. the frequency of the previous incident(s)
  - c. how long ago the incident(s) occurred
  - d. whether the person received counseling
  - e. the competency and effectiveness of any counseling received
  - f. the likelihood that the person will repeat the same type of behavior now
  - g. the possibility of legal liability if a jury concludes, on the basis of all evidence, that the church or denomination was negligent in hiring the person.
  - h. Winnebago Presbytery shall not approve Calls or placement that involve pastoral responsibilities for a permanent ministerial member, commissioned ruling elder, professional staff, or any elder who has been convicted of sexual misconduct in church or secular court. (*Sexual Misconduct Policy, Winnebago Presbytery*)

If COM determines the individual is not a viable candidate, the decision will be shared with the person and the PNC. Because of the sensitive nature and the need for confidentiality, this information will not be shared with the congregation or the presbytery at large.

### **B. CALL FROM THE CONGREGATION**

1. After referencing, background clearance and endorsement from COM, the PNC may invite the person to candidate.

### **C. MEMBERSHIP EXAMINATION**

**ALL PERSONS WHO ARE BEING CONSIDERED FOR A CALL MUST BE EXAMINED FOR PRESBYTERY MEMBERSHIP BY THE COM OR THE PRESBYTERY .** Each year the dates of these meetings will be given to all active Pastor Nominating Committees (PNC's) so plans can be made according to the set schedule.

#### **Examination Steps**

- Step 1: At a regularly scheduled Presbytery meeting or a regularly scheduled COM meeting, the candidate is examined for membership in Winnebago Presbytery. If the initial interview by COM was done via video conference, the membership interview must be done in person.
- Step 2: Each candidate will be asked the following questions:
- a. Select one particular point from your Faith Statement and expand upon it.
  - b. Name at least two issues that are facing the PC(USA) and tell us how you would as a presbyter engage in dialogue with your session, congregation or a fellow presbyter.
  - c. From your experience in seminary and/or ministry lift up a specific event or experience which exemplifies your understanding of the church.
  - d. Additional questions may come from the floor of Presbytery or COM.
- Step 3: When the examination is arrested, the candidate is excused from the floor. Discussion and voting occurs.
- Step 4: The candidate may not assume a pastoral position until his/her Presbytery membership is approved.